

Message Text

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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 3350

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TAGS: OREP, CS
SUBJ: CODEL CONYERS, JULY 30-AUGUST 5, 1978

REF: STATE 187766

1. REP JOHN CONYERS, JR. (D-MICHIGAN), CHAIRMAN OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON CRIME OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, VISITED COSTA RICA TO ATTEND THE LATIN AMERICAN PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE U.N. CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MR. HAYDEN W. GREGORY, COUNSEL, AND MR. STEVEN RAIKIN, ASSISTANT COUNSEL, OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE. MR. JAMES M.H. GREGG, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION, ATTENDED THE MEETING AS CHIEF OF THE U.S. DELEGATION.

2. REP CONYERS VISIT WAS MOST USEFUL TO THE EMBASSY. ALTHOUGH THE CONGRESSMAN SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME IN SAN JOSE ATTENDING THE DAILY U.N. SESSIONS, THE EMBASSY WAS ABLE TO ARRANGE A NUMBER OF MEETINGS WITH DISTINGUISHED COSTA RICANS, AS WELL AS A COUNTRY TEAM BRIEFING (INCLUDING AID, PC AND DEA PRESENTATIONS) AND AN EARLY MORNING VISIT TO A PEACE CORPS TRAINING CENTER. DURING HIS STAY MR. CONYERS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO MEET BRIEFLY WITH COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT AND MRS. RODRIGO CARAZO AND FOREIGN MINISTER RAFAEL ANGEL CALDERON. HE ALSO CALLED ON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT RODRIGO MADRIGAL AND HAD A SEPARATE MEETING WITH FORMER VICE PRESIDENT (AND OPPOSITION PARTY LEADER)
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CARLOS MANUEL CASTILLO. THE AMBASSADOR HOSTED A LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF THE CODEL AT WHICH GUESTS INCLUDED THE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT, INTERIOR MINISTER JUAN ECHEVERRIA AND GUIDO FERNANDEZ (DIRECTOR OF LK NACION, LARGEST OF COSTA RICA'S NEWSPAPERS).

3. THE COSTA RICANS APPRECIATED MR. CONYERS' LOW-KEY, EASY MANNER; HE WAS ABLE TO ENGAGE THEM IN PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS,

MOSTLY ON CRIME, HUMAN RIGHTS AND COSTA RICAN/AMERICAN CULTURAL
TIES. HE, IN FACT, ELICITED VIEWS FROM OPPOSING SIDES ON AN
IMPORTANT CURRENT ISSUE HERE (THE LAW VS. LEFTIST LABOR UNIONS)
WHICH PROVED TO BE MOST ENLIGHTENING AS REGARDS THE DIVERSITY
OF VIEWS PRESENT IN COSTA RICA ON HOW TO DEAL WITH CURRENT
LABOR STRIFE. CONGRESSMAN CONYERS SAID THAT HE HAS TRAVELED
INFREQUENTLY OUTSIDE OF THE U.S. AND FOUND THIS VISIT EDUCATIONAL
AND USEFUL. HE DEPARTED PROMISING NOT ONLY TO RETURN, BUT TO
TELL HIS CONGRESSIONAL COLLEAGUES THAT A VISIT TO THIS PAR-
TICULAR DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY WOULD BE WORTHWHILE. MR. CONYERS ALSO
NOTED HIS DIRECT INTEREST, FOLLOWING UP ON THE RECENT WHITE
HOUSE JAZZ CONCERT, ON PROMOTING A TOUR OF A WELL-KNOWN JAZZ
GROUP TO THIS AREA.
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